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SOME NOTES  
OF THE PAST

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SOME  
NOTES OF THE PAST,  
1870-1891.





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NOTES OF THE PAST,  
1870—1891.

BY THE RIGHT HON.  
SIR HENRY DRUMMOND WOLFF, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE greater portion of this volume has already been printed for distribution to some private friends. The subject chiefly treated has of late been revived into prominence by Monsieur Zola's novel, "La Débâcle." It has been suggested that the notes, if published, might be interesting to a larger number of readers, as presenting an impartial narrative of personal experiences and recollections.



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## SOME NOTES OF THE PAST.



### THREE VISITS TO THE WAR IN 1870.\*

Spa, September 6th.

It was impossible to remain at Spa, so near the seat of war, without attempting to see something. On Friday morning last, accompanied by Mr. Richard Baring and Captain Johnson, I left Spa by the 6.10 train. At the station we found the *Indépendance Belge*, containing a telegram from Bouillon, attributing the advantage to the French. At Liège, however, we met a German ambulance volunteer from Cologne, wearing the brassard, who told us he had

\* These letters to a friend were originally published with the writer's name in the *Morning Post*.

left Metz the Sunday previous, that Bazaine was securely surrounded, and that the report of his having effected his escape must be untrue. As usual, all the Walloon population believed and asserted the French victory. It is extraordinary to find how much in favour of France are the inhabitants of the frontier. During the whole war we knew that *bonnes nouvelles* were good news for the French, and *mauvaises nouvelles* the reverse. In the interior of Belgium the feeling is more in favour of Prussia.

At the junction station of Marloie, between thirty and forty miles from the frontier, we were informed at the buffet that the rolling of the cannon had been heard the whole of the previous day till between four and five. We learnt later that the last gun had been fired at 5.15 P.M. Here, however, the story was the same—that M'Mahon had conquered.



At Jemelle, a little lower down, the truth became evident. A train containing French soldiers of all arms was drawn up at the station, and a Belgian captain in charge of them told some Belgian gentlemen in our carriage that M'Mahon was *en pleine déroute*. The French soldiers were refugees chased across the frontier by Prussian cavalry. The latter, on being informed that they had transgressed the territory, at once retired. The French threw down their arms and constituted themselves prisoners. Some Prussian prisoners had also been taken. The French were to be sent to Beverloo, the Prussians to Bruges. At Jemelle two travellers who had left Spa the day before—Mr. Bennett, an Irish gentleman, and Mr. Thompson, a gentleman from New York—got into the train. They were bent on the same expedition as ourselves. At Libramont they left to take the diligence to Bouillon. We continued to the next station

of Longlier, near Neufchâteau, from which place we hoped to get a carriage. In the omnibus we found some volunteers for the Belgian ambulance with the French army going by Florenville to Carignan, and Captain Johnson and myself offered to volunteer, if necessary, for a short period. This was found afterwards to be needless. At Neufchâteau we witnessed an extraordinary discussion at the *table d'hôte* between a French traveller and a Belgian ambulance volunteer of Prussian proclivities. This, however, ended peacefully. Strange to say, at Neufchâteau the prevalent belief was that the French were victorious.

Securing a pretty good carriage and a stout pair of horses, we started for Bouillon at about two o'clock. We saw nothing to interest us at first beyond groups of French peasants, refugees from the neighbourhood of the battle-field, and some detachments of Belgian soldiers. At last arriving at a

village about half-way, we stopped to water our horses. Here two Belgian officers in command of a strong detachment for the first time gave us something like authentic details. The correspondent of a London paper, which we afterwards learnt to be the *Pall Mall Gazette*, had, a short time previously, passed on horseback on his way to the station at Libramont. He had informed them of the surrender of M'Mahon's army and of the Emperor, M'Mahon being severely wounded. This village was full of French peasants, and the officer informed us that the whole of the previous night he and his troops had been collecting and escorting French prisoners. Walking up a hill, leading from the village, we met a poor French woman who had brought away her two children, but had been unable to obtain news of her husband.

At last, about six o'clock, we arrived at Bouillon, which we found crowded by

masses of eager people—French soldiers, wounded and unwounded, French refugees, Belgian troops, newspaper correspondents of all nations, here and there a few Prussians. On our arrival we met Mr. Bennett and Mr. Thompson, who told us that they had been looking for lodgings, but could find none. The hotel was full. At a *café*, at which we enquired, the landlady had given up her own room to a wounded French officer. At another *café* we were offered the billiard table, provided we would only go to bed at eleven when the house closed. Few things impressed me with the difference of peace and war so much as the commotion at Bouillon. It is a little town, beautifully situated on the Semois, and very opulent. With one other commune of Belgium, it possesses so much landed property that not only do its rents pay the whole taxes, but the inhabitants receive at the end of each year a dividend. Yet, notwithstanding its

insignificance, here it was for the moment almost the focus of European interest. To the credit of the inhabitants, it may be said that they did not raise the prices of anything except lodging. Whatever you managed to procure was charged at the ordinary rate. At length we contrived to find a room to accommodate five on beds and mattresses ranged round it. On our way to the hotel we saw an officer of the Russian service attached to the headquarters of the Prussian army, Prince Mestchersky. I had known him previously, but did not at once recognise him. I saw him later at the hotel, when he confirmed the news we had heard. He had driven over with a retired officer of the Prussian army, now in command of the ambulance, and wearing the brassard, though in uniform. It appeared that on the 1st the King had sent, in answer to the Emperor's message, certain conditions which were to

be accepted by the latter by two o'clock on the 2nd. As no firing had been heard at that hour it was inferred that the proposals had been accepted. It is impossible to describe the scene presented at the hotel—numbers of persons eating a scrambling dinner as best they could, all talking at once and giving different versions of what they had seen and heard. Amongst others present were the members of the French Legation at Brussels, as also some Austrians, two English correspondents, and several Belgians and French, one of whom had been employed by the *Moniteur*, and had travelled with a corps of Franc-tireurs. Some French correspondents were accompanied by their wives. All ascribed the French losses, in the first instance, to a total absence of *éclaireurs*; secondly, to incapacity on the part of generals, especially of De Failly; while a few hinted at treachery. Everybody had seen something, everybody

had heard something, and every report was contradictory. De Failly's corps had, however, evidently been surprised in a manner impossible except from want of *éclaireurs*. The officers were playing billiards or strolling about, and the soldiers had been ordered to take their guns to pieces and clean them. While thus occupied they were attacked. The description of the arrival of the French stragglers was most harrowing. They had marched for days, had eaten nothing for forty-eight hours, and were fainting from exhaustion and dejection. At length every one seemed inclined for rest, and we went to our room. At six in the morning we started on our journey with scarcely any breakfast—only a cup of coffee and a slice of bad bread. Everything else had been consumed. We provided ourselves, nevertheless, with two boxes of cigars to distribute to the soldiers. It was with difficulty we persuaded our driver to take us

onward. His reluctance would, under other circumstances, have been amusing. We had to persuade and promise him at the end of every kilometre. In a short time, after passing through a beautiful country, we arrived at the Belgian frontier, the houses on all sides being full of wounded. We were asked a few questions by the *douaniers*, who had no news to give us, and went on. And now the whole scene changed with suddenness. We were nearing the village of La Chapelle, where there had been two fights—one in which the Wurtemberg forces had been worsted, the other which had been fatal to the French against the Prussian Guard and the Saxons under the Crown Prince of Saxony. Soon, on a height, we came across a Prussian encampment on the left of the road. Troops of all arms. Here we made our first acquaintance with the Uhlans. We offered cigars to those nearest us, who accepted them joyfully.



If the British public want to do a kind act, let them send cigars to the soldiers of both armies. They value these more than meat or drink or covering.

As we reached the brow of the hill we saw a staff officer riding up and down near a waggon in the middle of the road. He was not above a cigar. He told us that the troops were moving. "Where to?" we asked. "To Paris, to dictate peace," was the answer. We then enquired if we could be allowed to go further. He said there was nothing to prevent us, except that we should perhaps find physical impediments in the movements of the troops. A few steps further took us to the top of the hill, and here an extraordinary sight greeted us. A valley on our left, the opposite side of which was covered with Prussian troops; while on the hills around us, on our right, the same uniforms were swarming. We saw few tents, except *tentes d'abri*. But

there were waggons, guns and tumbrils, and ambulance waggons moving the wounded in every direction. We now arrived at La Chapelle, which is situated in a gorge of the hills. This was full of Prussian troops. The houses and church contained wounded, and French prisoners stood about. An officer stopped us, accepted some cigars, and then good-humouredly gave us leave to proceed. He also told us that in the battle the *Times* correspondent had been killed; and now began the sternest realities of war. First, some dead horses in the fields, two evidently killed by one shot; next, a horse lying across the road, a dead Zouave in a ditch on the left—another further on the right; great wounds gaping in them—their eyes open, with a glazed stare. Soon more of them. The road was covered with *débris*—cartridge cases torn open and showing the form of a cross. Knapsacks everywhere, tin cans, tin spoons, worsted epaulettes,

parchment books, called “*Livret d’Homme de Troupe*,” pieces of music for the band, letters, broken arms, bayonets, bullets. Of these we picked up some specimens. I have a bullet of the needle gun, the Saxon gun and the chassepôt and a chassepôt bayonet sword. I also took a *livret* belonging to Couard, of the 33<sup>ème</sup> Régiment d’Infanterie de Ligne, and a piece of music—the bass part of two tunes; on one side, “*Quatre Hommes et un Caporal*,” on the other “*Le Mirliton*.” The *livret* was evidently that of a young soldier, as it contained no entries.

I have before me a bundle of letters, sewn together, found by Mr. Bennett—the correspondence of a soldier with the woman he wished to marry and her brother. It is evident his own family were opposed to the match and tried to excite his jealousy; the letters being protestations of love and fidelity, complaints of the insults of his

mother and sisters, and assurances that “cette fois je ne vois plus Leboilier.” Mr. Thompson picked up a German Bible.

Some Saxon soldiers came near us. We gave them cigars, and they offered to accompany us over the field, which was on the right of the road. It was planted with mangel-wurzel, but slippery and wet. It had been raining all day. Here the disorder was more complete, and the sights more sickening. There were few Prussian corpses. It was evident that the French had been destroyed by artillery. The place was a hill, encircled by other hills, on each of which the Prussians had been posted. Here a man lay, the whole crown of his head carried off. We saw the inside of his skull like a basin. Another had been struck on the lower part of his face. His forehead and nose remained; all the rest of his face and the front of his neck blown away to the chest. Other sights still worse. I observed,

however, the truth of what I had often heard—that the faces of those dying of gun-shot wounds are peaceful. Their hands were clenched, as though in pain, but their faces were calm. It is certainly a salutary lesson to see a battle-field before the dead are buried. Here are hundreds of brave men slaughtered—and for what?

Coming down again to the road we drove forward and soon came to the village of Givonne, about a mile from Sedan. Here the scene again changed. French soldiers and officers, unarmed, were walking freely about, tending the wounded, who occupied every house, including the church. We drove on through a “place” filled with trees, and at last, turning round, suddenly arrived in a covered way, and at the gate of a fortified town. The road was full of French soldiers. The drawbridge was up, and we could not drive in. At that moment came a detachment of soldiers of

many regiments. We gave one or two cigars. No sooner had we done so than we were surrounded, almost with violence, hands being stretched on every side into the windows. One man entreated for a cigar. "Donnez-moi un cigare, et je vous donnerai dix sous," he said. It was melancholy to see the downcast looks of the soldiers who had not received one when our box was emptied. Fortunately, one of our party had reserved a few in his pocket for future use. The expressions used by these men were most distressing. They did not complain of the Prussians. "We are quite worth them," they said; "our officers have betrayed us. We were ready to fight. They did not know how to command. We wanted to fire, and they forbade us." One young fellow told us he had only been seventeen days a soldier. Another said he had only done the exercise four times when he was sent to the war. At length an

officer ordered them off, asking them if they were not ashamed to beg, adding to us, rather gruffly, "You should not encourage this kind of thing."

Fearing to leave the carriage, which contained our travelling bags, so near the gate, we drove out about half a mile, instructing the coachman to give the horses something, and to try and find some food for himself. We had already applied at a baker's shop which was battered about with shell. They said they were about to bake, but at the moment we could find nothing. Mr. Baring had bought at Liège, the day before, half a chicken, and a roll, which he kindly gave us, and we had a flask of brandy. Leaving the carriage at Givonne we went back to Sedan, and entered by a hole in the wall near the drawbridge, through which ran the gutter. We had seen the French, both soldiers and peasants, take this road.

We were now in Sedan. It was filled on the boulevard near the gate by crowds of unarmed French soldiers, as well as of the ordinary inhabitants. But there was not a single Prussian. On our entry a well-dressed woman, evidently well to do, asked us if she could get safely to Balan. She had left it to reassure a daughter who lives at Sedan, and now wished to get home. We told her that all was quiet, that we had been civilly treated by the Prussians, and that we heard they were inviting the inhabitants to return. We did not know that Balan was one of the towns burnt by the Germans, and I fear she probably found her home destroyed.

We then asked a woman to direct us to an hotel. She kindly desired a boy standing near to show us the way, and guided by him we plunged into the town. Crossing a bridge, we went down a street, at the doors of which the inhabitants were stand-



ing, while hundreds of French soldiers were walking in the middle. No shops were open but some *cabarets*. At last we came to the main street, which was densely crowded by soldiers making their way to the *corps de garde*. At the corner of one street was fixed a proclamation by the Emperor, dated August 31. It ran something thus:—"Success has not hitherto followed our arms. I have therefore abandoned the command of the troops to my marshals, and shall fight as a simple soldier. Meanwhile I leave the Government to the Empress, who so well replaces me at Paris. Our misfortunes should animate all noble hearts. If there are cowards they will be treated by military law and the contempt of their neighbours." After arriving at the *corps de garde* we turned to the left to the inn. This we found closed, and the boy then offered to take us to the hotel, where "all the

generals eat their breakfast." We then traversed the small "place" in which the *corps de garde* was situated. It was now crowded with soldiers, and in the midst was a mounted general giving orders. Our guide told us it was General Fénélon. The agitation was immense. The soldiers were evidently beyond the control of their officers, who were patient with them, but most disheartened in appearance. They were being mustered to surrender to the Prussians, who were to arrive at two. We got through the crowd unperceived, but as we turned up a back street to the hotel, the crowd, though still considerable, was not so dense, and the soldiers looked at us in a very lowering manner. Mr. Bennett offered one of them a cigar, which he refused. Before the inn were some desperate-looking Turcos. We got to the door, and asked for some food. There was nothing for us, so we asked our

guide to take us back to the Bouillon gate.

Passing down a street we found some soldiers drunk, and brandishing weapons with which the street was covered. Of a sudden a cavalry detachment came past. "Make way!" shouted an officer. The soldiers looked round and obeyed, making grimaces. A mounted soldier offered us his cartouche-box. "Prenez ça," he said. I declined. He then threw it down saying, "Va, done!" and cursing it. Another gave our boy guide his horse-pistol. The streets were covered, as I have said, with arms—cavalry swords, bent, battered and broken, and chassepôts. At last we reached a boulevard running along the river, with trees planted. This was still more strewn with weapons of all kinds, and about stood soldiers, drunk and furious, cursing, quarrelling, shouting in every direction, and looking at us dubiously. Some soldiers

took up chassepôts and dashed them against the trees till they were broken; others broke swords. We were not sorry to arrive at the gate. In the space before it were lying dead horses, from which, as from others, we had seen the soldiers cutting out slices for food. On the gates was a proclamation signed "De Wimpffen." I confess to not having stopped to read it.

At length we were out of the gate. Here was a crowd, but much diminished. A horse, recently killed, was lying there. A little further on we found a French soldier threatening another, and finally attacking him, saying, "You will find I am not a coward, as you were yesterday."

We found our carriage where we had left it. The driver had procured hay for the horses, but nothing for himself. The bakery had not yet begun to bake. A Frenchman asked us to take him across the frontier. We were obliged to refuse, our

carriage being full. We now started homewards. The rain had ceased for the moment; and when we arrived near the field where the bodies lay, we found on our right in the valley a division of Prussians defiling up the hills. We stopped our carriage, and, standing on the bank, looked at them through glasses. At that moment a detachment of Hussars rode up, and we told our coachman to draw on one side. The colonel, however, who turned out to be a Count Starpfritz, a stern man of about forty, asked who we were. We answered that we were Englishmen who had left Bouillon that morning for Sedan and were returning. "Are you medical men?" he asked. "No." "Newspaper correspondents?" "No; we are merely travellers. We started from Bouillon and asked leave of every successive officer to proceed." "Where is your permit?" "We have none, but here are our passports." "Is

that your carriage?" Then, looking at our passports, English and American, he said: "You will go to the general at La Chapelle and obtain a permit from him." Turning to a corporal and a soldier, he desired them to escort us. To our great solace, we saw the latter place a cartouche in his carbine. The corporal, however, accepted a cigar, having first looked back to see he was not watched.

After a short walk we arrived at La Chapelle, which was full of troops on the move. The rain had again begun. We were at first left with some French prisoners, then marched up and down the village, through horses' legs and up to our ankles in mud, till we arrived at the door of a house, at which stood a fine, soldierly looking general. We explained our position. He was very civil—just glanced at our passports, and told us they were obliged to take precautions against the

people of the country who were hostile. He also asked us if we were not correspondents. Then, taking a card from his case, he wrote a word or two, and gave it me, saying, "Here is my card; give it to any one you may meet and say I have looked at your papers, et allez-vous-en." I have the card still: "Von Pape, General Major und Commandeur der 1<sup>te</sup> Garde Infanterie Division."\* It appeared he had received promotion, and had therefore altered the words from "2<sup>d</sup> Garde Infanterie Brigade" to those above.

After waiting for some time till the troops had marched off we drove up the hill, and soon heard from some inhabitants that they had seen the Emperor pass. Further on we found an old woman, bent and crippled. She told us she had left Bazeille, one of the villages burnt by the Prussians. She said she had been beaten

\* Now Governor of Berlin, 1892.

and maltreated, and she was dreadfully bruised. All accounts seem to say the Germans (Bavarians, I believe) behaved severely at this village. One woman had killed three wounded Prussian soldiers with a revolver and was hanged in consequence. Generally speaking, however, I heard good accounts of the Germans. The French prisoners say they are kindly treated. At La Chapelle we gave two Prussian soldiers cigars. They pointed to a wounded French soldier saying, "*Er muss auch rauchen.*" He told us on our enquiring in French that he was well treated.

Approaching the Belgian frontier we met some peasants returning home. They asked our opinion, and we advised them to continue. They had also seen the Emperor. A little further on we came on a detachment of Prussian Hussars. They are, I believe, the first regiment of that arm, and



are called by the French, "*les Hussards de la Mort.*" They are dressed in black, with a Death's Head and cross-bones on their busbies. The dress is, however, not so appalling as the description. The skull is a great sprawling object straggling over the busby, and the black uniforms look shabby. The officers were grouped together. They all spoke French, and fortunately we still had a few cigars. They told us that they had escorted the Emperor to the frontier. There was something ominous in the choice of this corps for an escort. On the frontier a Belgian escort had relieved them.

We now arrived at the Douane. The officers shyly asked us the usual question, "*Rien à déclarer?*" Before long we joined the hindermost horses of the Emperor's train. The length of the *cortége* was great. We judged of it as it turned round over a bridge at right angles with the main

road. First his own carriage, a travelling Berlin, then an open carriage; after these followed two or three carriages, somewhat like prison vans, containing members of his staff. I fancy they are what the French call *char-a-bancs*. After these, fourgons, all marked "Maison militaire de l'Empereur." Next, a number of horses, with Imperial servants in their liveries. Magnificent horses, I should say over 16 hands high, mounted by postilions, with glazed hats and gay coats and scarlet waistcoats. These are relays for his carriages; hacks, saddle-horses, chargers — horses beyond price follow. A Belgian paper says there were 110. We come to Bouillon, and, leaving our carriage, we walk along the Emperor's train till we arrive at the hotel we had dined at the night before. There the Emperor had got down with his staff. The crowd is enormous, well dressed and enthusiastic. Belgian troops keep off the

people. Superior French officers walk about, amongst them Prince Achille Murat, in the dandy dress of the Chasseurs d'Afrique. The Emperor comes to the window; I do not see him, but my friends do. I hear the crowd shout "Vive l'Empereur!" The French prisoners are silent. The weather has cleared up, and the scene is most animated in this pretty town. At length we manage to get into the hotel. Beds? Impossible! The Emperor and his suite occupy them all, and the landlord has been obliged to turn out the guests already in the house. Dinner? Impossible! The Emperor is about to sit down with twenty, afterwards there is another dinner for fifteen. At any rate, some bread and butter and some wine. While I am eating this in a back room, some of my companions see the Emperor, going down to dinner with his suite. The crowd know his *menu*—an omelette and bœuf piqué.

Our driver now comes to say he can find no billet for his horses, and that he must start homewards at once. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Thompson are looking for rooms. We have to decide at once, and drive off to Neufchâteau without them.

On consultation with our driver we first go to Bertry, a village about six miles from Libramont and nine miles from Neufchâteau. He thinks we may find a difficulty about rooms at the latter place, on account of the Belgian troops, so we stop at Bertry, which looks at first unpromising, but where we find a good supper and clean beds. Everything in the Ardennes is wonderfully cheap. Our supper was excellent; our beds, as I say, clean; our breakfast good; and the charge for three travellers was 4 fr. each, in all 12 fr. Here we meet Belgians who have scoured the frontier. One of them has been at Paliseul, a village full of French prisoners. The

woods are full of horses belonging to French cavalry. They are sold at 10 fr. and 20 fr. each. He has seen a Frenchman detected in betraying his country to the Prussians for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  fr. a day. The French tied him to a cart-wheel, and towed him for two days twisting round and round. He is not yet dead, but dying.

News had reached this place of the Emperor's journey, and our carriage was taken at first for his. The Belgian general in command therefore sent for me to ask me the latest news. We went to bed, and thus closed the most remarkable day of my life.

The next morning we engaged a carriage to take us to Libramont, about six miles distant. After driving a short distance we perceived on a height behind us the *piqueurs* of the Emperor, shortly followed by his carriage and train. At Recogne, a village three and a half kilometres from

Libramont, we passed a detachment of Belgian artillery ready to receive him, and soon after we reached our destination. A train was about to start a little after eleven, but we missed it purposely.

Shortly after, some carriages and horses arrived; with them a young Spaniard and an Englishman. The Emperor stopped at a house in the village for breakfast, and some of his servants came to the *café* where I was breakfasting. They were more communicative than any I had met; in fact, we had all abstained from asking any questions of the French officers. Many of these were at Libramont, utterly broken down and wretched. I saw one talking to a lady, who was trying to console him. "Yes," I heard him say, as the tears streamed from his eyes, "but think of the humiliation for France."

From one of the Emperor's staff I learned that the Prussian artillery was overpower-

ing, and appears fully to demonstrate the superiority of breech-loading over muzzle-loading cannon. At Sedan there was no cannon of a date later than 1815. He added, "If the war continues, it must be one of partisans and hand to hand. We have no chance against the Prussian artillery." At about two the Emperor came in his carriage, drawn by four horses, to the door of the station. A general officer was with him, who, we were told, was General Castelnau. He seemed well. His features showed little emotion. He leant heavily on the servant who helped him out, but walked well. He wore a red kepi embroidered in gold, and decorations on his uniform. A despatch was given him, and, after speaking to some of the French legation and the Belgian authorities, he sat down and wrote. He then walked on the platform of the station, and on returning to the waiting-room smoked a cigarette

and read the *Indépendance Belge*. A special train came for him, and he went off with his suite with General Chazal, the Belgian commander-in-chief, General von Bezen, a Prussian officer, and Prince von Lynar, also a Prussian.

It was not yet time to be off, so after an early dinner we stood waiting at the station. This was full of French officers, and also some Prussians. Of a sudden a carriage drove up, containing the Duke of Manchester, in the undress uniform of the Huntingdonshire Yeomanry, and a gentleman who had been with him through the campaign, Mr. Hartopp. They had been in Sedan on horseback, shortly after ourselves, and had almost met with rough usage, the duke having been taken for a German.

After these followed a gentleman on horseback, with a servant. It was Mr. Russell of the *Times*. He announced to



us the death of Colonel Christopher Pemberton, the *Times* correspondent, whose death had been mentioned to us by the Prussian officer at La Chapelle. On his way out, about six weeks ago, I had travelled with him from Brussels to Pepinster. He was full of animation at the prospect of the war and his new employment. The train was late, and missed the Liège train at Marloie. We slept at an excellent hotel at a pretty town called Marche, where we regaled and lodged sumptuously, the charge for four persons for dinner, bed, breakfast, a bottle of so-called Léoville, and the “service,” being only 24 fr. 70 c. The next morning, at Liège, we learnt that the Empress was expected between ten and eleven.

## ON THE WAR FRONTIER.

Spa, September 20th.

WE left Esch on Monday morning. It is a small frontier town in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, to which a railway has lately been opened. I was travelling with Mr. Henry James, M.P.\* We took with us some thousands of cigars and other articles subscribed at Spa for the wounded, and we were furnished with a recommendation from the North-German Minister at Brussels to the Prussian authorities in the line of the war. At Esch, by the assistance of the Luxemburg Ambulance Society, we obtained, as a conveyance, a common country

\* Now Right Hon. Sir Henry James, Q.C., M.P., late Attorney-General.

cart with two horses. Planks were nailed for seats across the sides ; clean straw was placed inside. It contained our boxes, and in case of need would have served for a lodging. Our first stage was Briey, distant about twelve or fifteen miles. Before long we crossed the frontier, and at once perceived the evidences of the Prussian army. Isolated soldiers, occasionally a house with the sign of an ambulance. Now we came to the relics of a Prussian bivouac—on either side of the road grass fields bestrewn with branches on which the soldiers had lain, or of which they had made huts, and short stakes planted in the ground to fasten the cavalry horses. Wherever we came on bivouacs—and this was often—we found great use made of green branches. Sometimes we came across huts made of straw. In the long avenue of poplars which border French roads we frequently found sentry boxes picturesquely made with branches

placed conically against the trees. The most striking marks of devastation on the roads were the number of poplars cut down.

Briey is a small straggling town on the side of a hill. The houses mostly bore the sign of the Geneva cross, indicating the presence of wounded. On the walls were posted proclamations, one declaring that persons with arms, and found guilty of any hostile act, would be shot; another calling on all persons having arms to deposit them at the Hôtel de Ville; a third inviting any householders having in their houses French wounded who had not been tended by Prussian medical men to notify the fact within twenty-four hours. At the inn we met Mr. Sewell, the head of the English Ambulance. We were much pleased with the energy of his colleague, Mr. Syman, at Esch. Mr. Sewell was about to start with supplies for the different villages. He declared himself well provided. We then

went round all the hospitals. Many of the wounded had been taken away. Those left had been wounded at the fight of Ste. Marie. The houses were large and airy, the best of them having been taken for hospitals—the Hôtel de Ville, the convent and some private residences. All wounded were kindly tended and with equal care. Some of the sights were terrible. Men beyond hope and in pain lying silently, and men with slighter gradation of wounds; here a litter, there a stretcher or a coffin. The French and Prussians were in separate rooms. One hospital devoted to patients with typhus we were not allowed to visit. The superintendent of a house which had been a school told us most distressing anecdotes of the Germans. Most of them had been educated men in respectable positions in life. One, a Saxon, told him he had left a wife and ten children.

At a window we saw a French officer,

an elderly man and apparently of some rank. He told us he wanted for nothing, that he had been well tended, and that the wound in his leg was fast healing. We asked him how he had been treated. He answered "Perfectly," and that all his wants were fully supplied. While our horses were getting ready we had a long conversation with some of the inhabitants. They asked us the news, scarcely being able to credit the surrender of the Emperor. They were strongly against him, saying, however, that he had been disgracefully deceived by those whose fortunes he had made, and who turned against him in adversity. All they wanted was peace. They had heard vaguely of the Republic being declared at Paris, and said, "Now we have a Republic there is no chance of peace. It is very well the Republicans at Paris talking of war. They have had no experience of it as we have. When they

have had everything taken from them, their homes invaded, and their crops destroyed, they will know what war is, and will be ready enough for peace." We asked them how the Prussians had treated them. They replied, one and all, that they could not complain. They said, "The soldiers must eat, and they eat up everything. But they pay for it or give paper, which will some day be paid, we suppose. Apart from this, however, we cannot speak ill of them. Of course in a time of war everything is not rosewater, but the conduct of the Prussians has not been exaggerated, and they have committed no outrage on peaceable citizens."

Leaving Briey we started for Ste. Marie-aux-Chênes, a distance of about eight miles, the scene of a terrible battle, and now almost exclusively occupied by hospitals. On our way we passed by several posts of Prussians and some bivouacs. Here and

there crosses in fields and gardens showed where the dead had been buried. As we were driving down a hill, about two miles from the village, we met a waggon containing two or three military men in uniform, but with the Johanniter cross and the brassard. With them was a civilian. To my surprise I recognised a German gentleman I had known in London, who had left for the army the moment war was declared. He had been rejected as a volunteer on account of his not having previously served, and then joined the Johanniters, where his assistance has been most beneficial and highly appreciated. He jumped down at once, and insisted on returning with us to Ste. Marie, where he offered to show us what was best worth seeing, and to lodge us for the night. We soon came to Ste. Marie. It is on the high road to Metz, and situated on a large plateau, round which has been the scene of



a fearful battle on the 18th of August. Here the left wing of the Prussian army, which extended along down to Gravelotte and Pont-à-Mousson, had fought the right of the French, entrenched about three-quarters of a mile further up, at a village called St. Privat-la-Montagne. The Prussians had a hard time of it on the plain, being uncovered and exposed to the telling fire of the chassépôt from the French infantry protected by the walls of St. Privat. In return they could fire no small arms with effect, and until their artillery was brought up the losses inflicted were most severe. At length, the heavy field guns having completely destroyed the walls, the Saxon cavalry charged the heights of St. Privat with a deadly result, and the French were forced within the walls of Metz.

On the 14th took place the battle called by the Prussians that of Courcelles, in

which were engaged the 1st and the 8th *corps d'armée*. On this day the Prussians acknowledged a loss in killed and wounded of 6000.

On the 16th the battle took place called by the Prussians that of Mars-la-Tour. In this they lost 15,600 men and 600 officers. The *corps d'armée* engaged were the 2nd Army, of which the 3rd Army Corps bore the brunt, assisted by the 7th and the 10th. On the 18th the battle was fought called by the Prussians that of Rezonville. In this the 2nd Army Corps and the Saxons lost 22,000. These figures are the lowest estimate we received.

We had only time to deposit our heavy baggage at the head-quarters of the Ambulance Corps at Ste. Marie when our friend, Mr. Schott, took us forward. We advanced up the high road, bordered with poplars, all the country round showing traces of battle. Sheds were being built for barracks

of planks sawn from trees recently cut down. Bivouacs with the branch huts were here and there visible. More than once we came on a heap of knapsacks in squares of from forty to fifty feet that had fallen from shoulders that will never again carry them. All about were crosses, showing where the dead had been buried by hundreds, and the atmosphere was heavy with the smell of dead flesh that pierced through the meagre earthen coverlet.

After a short time we reached St. Privat. Here we found a town in ruins. Every house was without a roof, most of the walls were battered down, and the muddy ground was cumbered with old shoes, shreds of knapsacks, scabbards, broken muskets, and rags of clothing. The windows had been taken, where not shattered, to assist in building the barrack sheds, and the houses stood roofless and windowless in their grim

desolation. We went to the church. In the churchyard were the tombstones, shattered and upset. Those that remained whole had been carefully ranged by the Prussians against the only wall that was standing. From one which had been untouched still hung by a piece of string the bead wreath attached to it by mourners. The church was completely unroofed, except a narrow strip of the chancel, in which stood intact the gilded altar. The ground was covered with *débris*.

At this place the Knight of St. John, who was the head of the Ambulance Corps, asked permission of a general to take us to Bellevue, a height overlooking Metz. This was at first refused, for fear of attracting shells from the beleaguered, but we were allowed to go on at our own risk as far as we could on the high road. So on we went, a Lutheran chaplain having joined our party. We now arrived at a hamlet

called Marengo. Another hamlet in the neighbourhood is called Leipzig, and another Jerusalem. Here, at Marengo, we again communicated with a Prussian guard, who allowed us to go on. The country was covered with brushwood and forest. We endeavoured to penetrate the brushwood on the left, which gave the best view; but two sentries started from the covert and told us they had orders to stop all access. We therefore advanced a little way up the hill until, in silence and in the twilight, we saw the town of Metz lying in the valley before us. The town was distant about eight kilometres—five English miles—but the strongest of the forts, that of St. Quentin, was within two kilometres. We were within range. But all was quiet. The high fort overlooked us. Between that and the town, on a slope, was the French encampment. The cathedral stood forth prominently, and in the winding of

the river stood an island, also covered by masses of French troops. Between us and the town lay the Prussian army, concealed by the wood, their presence, as was evidenced by the aim of the French artillery, unknown to the besieged. We stood watching for some time, till one or two guns sounding from distant batteries warned us that the fire might become general, so we turned home to Ste. Marie.

On our return we were shown a sight we had not noticed before. After the battle of St. Privat 4000 wounded had been laid side by side in the street ; and along it was a dark margin, about ten feet in width, clearly marked and formed by the saturation of the blood in the macadamised roadway. At the house of the ambulance officers we found several Prussian officers employed on this duty. Among others two general officers, Knights of St. John, who had come to see two men severely wounded.

I shall never forget the conversation of that evening. There was no boasting, no exultation. The French were spoken of with admiration. Their own losses were mentioned with grief, and with a desire for peace—a peace that should be certain and durable, but without any strong desire for territorial gains. What struck me most was the enthusiastic confidence in their King. His name recurred at frequent intervals with expressions of the warmest personal affection. The dinner was simple—mutton, in a kind of Irish stew, and potatoes. We were glad to be able to add some provisions we had brought with us from Spa. The only luxury they had was a drink, half negus, half punch, which was necessary to sustain them in their labours. They told us anecdotes of the campaign, but especially of their own service. One battalion of the 24th Regiment had lost all its officers, and were led into the town of

St. Privat by a sergeant. Of the Guard, 70 officers had been buried at Ste. Marie, and 200 were wounded. Scarcely a noble family of Germany had escaped unscathed. At first all had been in confusion with the wounded till a Madame Simon had come to put everything in order. Many ladies also came in search of those they had lost—the mother and widow of M. von Behrenfels, and Princess Salm, the widow of the officer who had followed the Emperor Maximilian in his adventures.

Before going to bed we walked in the street. From the window of almost every house we heard the most fearful groans and shrieks. The wounds inflicted by fragments of French shells are awful. We were shown to our rooms; mattresses were spread on the floor. It was plastered with rough beams in the ceiling. In some parts of the wall the plaster was broken off; in others it was spattered with blood. We had some



sheets not yet required for the ambulance. My pillow was made of a bundle of worsted stockings, sent by some charitable person for the wounded.

The next morning, having left a good supply of cigars, we started for Ars-sur-Moselle. This road led us through nearly the whole field of battle through Verneville to Gravelotte. Before leaving we had picked up some bullets in the field near Ste. Marie. All the arms had been collected, but behind almost every tree were two or three bullets, both French and Prussian. The road to Ars-sur-Moselle was covered by troops. At every village were barracks, on nearly every knoll a bivouac. We saw one large country house completely destroyed. A long wall that enclosed another was perforated with rough loopholes beaten through the stone. Everywhere were houses damaged by shell and bullets. Now we saw a train of ambulance and provision

waggon, now a body of troops marching on Metz. Everywhere we met with civility, and nowhere, either from Prussian soldiers or French peasants, did we find any impediment or discourtesy. At one place we found a railway being made to skirt the town of Metz. Near the town of Ars are some large ironworks ; at the end of these along a narrow valley comes the town, which was encumbered with waggon of all kinds impeding our way. At last by good fortune we neared the station ; a train was about to start of enormous length, nearly a quarter of a mile. Showing our recommendation to the commandant, we received an order of admission. The train was one exclusively for sick and wounded. It consisted of enormous vans of about thirty feet long, marked to carry thirty men or six horses. Beds and straw were laid along the floors, and these were covered with both French and Prussians, wounded,

or prostrate with typhus, etc., and about to be taken to Nancy. The train moved but slowly. On the Moselle we saw a pontoon bridge, and everywhere traces of the struggle. At all stations we stayed a long time on account of the sick, so that our progress was much delayed. The delight of the poor men on obtaining cigars from us was excessive. However ill or prostrate, they asked or beckoned for them, and I must once more beg you to urge on those who are purveying for the wounded to send a good supply of them. At every place the demand was for cigars. The supply is never sufficient. In Belgium they can be had for a very small sum, and those we took were much commended. In our compartment was a young ambulance officer from Aix-la-Chapelle, so ill that we did not think he would last the journey. On arriving at Nancy we found a great crowd at the station. Numbers of peasants

and others came to offer refreshments to the prisoners, while surgeons superintended the arrival of the sick. The waiting-rooms had been turned into hospitals, with trestle beds for those who could not bear further motion, and wooden sheds outside the station were in course of erection for the same purpose. The station reeked of chloride of lime, which was very necessary. We were a long time getting into the town. Carriages or omnibuses there were none, of course, and porters were not admitted into the station. At last we found one with a truck, but now came a difficulty in obtaining a room. We wandered in vain from one hotel to another, every one being filled under Prussian requisition, till we hit upon a small one, not far from the station, where we obtained clean, though scanty, accommodation. The house was full of officers and their servants, all very quiet, but not communicative. Few could

speaking anything but German, and we found in the towns less cordiality than from the Prussian authorities in the country districts. About the town were posted proclamations of different kinds relative to the administration of the Government and province. One regulated the manner in which taxes were to be collected, offering a premium to mayors and others for ready payment in their districts. Another announced the head-quarters of the King, while a third related the catastrophe at Laon, and the contusion received by Herzog Wilhelm.

The town was perfectly quiet, except for the constant movement of soldiers. The streets are very fine, and the place into which the palace of Stanislas opens out is very striking. Behind the palace is a handsome wooded enclosure. Near it is the Chapelle Ronde, a fine edifice, containing the tombs of the dukes of Lorraine. But the people were the most interesting

study. They moved about in mournfulness, afraid to converse, as gatherings of more than three were prohibited. Occasionally a French sergent-de-ville or two might be seen mildly advising those collected to disperse. But the feeling seemed to be less that of past annoyance than of misgiving for the future. There was little news even for the Prussians. Rumours there were that the French had left Paris; others that Jules Favre had gone to the Prussian head-quarters; but newspapers had arrived neither from Paris nor Germany, and New York was probably better informed than this city of Lorraine, full of French associations, but crowded with German troops.

At a *café* a curious trait struck me. I had asked for a glass of liqueur. The waiter brought me some brandy. I observed this to his companion, who called him back, saying, "This gentleman asked for

liqueur, not brandy." He made no apology. I then said to him in a low tone of voice, "I am not a Prussian, so you might give me some liqueur." His face at once changed, and apologising, he said, "Let me go and fetch it for you."

An interesting scene also took place at the hotel the next morning. Our landlady stood discussing with some German officers the chances of the war. One of them observed in bad French, but good-naturedly, "The French are brave, but they have no more army." "No more army! have not we?" she answered; "I shall like to hear what you will have to say about it in eight days. And, after all, what have you done? M'Mahon's army was betrayed, but you have failed to take Metz, or Strasburg, or Bitche, or Thionville, or Toul, or Phalsburg. So I do not think you have much to boast of." I never saw anything so genial and good-tempered as the way in

which her sallies were received—a mixture of admiration and amusement.

The only instance I met with of ill-temper on the part of the Prussians was the day after. A bridge passes over the railway. The parapets of this are raised by a wooden hoarding, evidently to prevent communication with detachments of French prisoners sent through to Germany. The approaches to the bridge have, however, only a railing, and sentries are stationed to keep the crowd from the pavement near it. A train full of prisoners arrived, and the crowd, naturally anxious to see their fellow-countrymen, pressed forward, not so far as the rails, but over the kerb stone. I saw a Prussian sentry strike a little boy very roughly with the side of his bayonet, and push off two respectable-looking peasant women very brutally. The suppressed rage of the Frenchmen near was painful to witness. Had any officer been present the sentry



would have been probably punished. I tell the story, however, as it occurred.

As the train came in with a freight so unaccustomed as a cargo of French soldiers conveyed through their own country to imprisonment elsewhere, crowds flocked to the stations with provisions of every kind—soap, wine, linen and fruit in abundance. They were not prevented giving these, but there was evidently a great fear of the communication on the part of the Prussians. This was the reason, no doubt, of the crowd being kept from the bridge. The anxiety of some of them to see the soldiers was painful. One woman came up to us and implored us to say if we had seen the figures 78 on any of the soldiers' caps. Near me on the bridge stood a Frenchman murmuring to himself, "Poor devils! I hope they will have the luck the others had." I asked him what he meant, and he evaded the question. I said, "I am not a

Prussian spy," and showed him my passport. He then told me that some days previously, as a train of prisoners left Nancy, a body of Franc-tireurs had fired on the driver, stopped the train, and released the prisoners. I do not know if this be true, but there can be no doubt that Franc-tireurs have been harassing the Prussians very much in the outskirts. A lady, the wife of a Prussian officer, at Nancy, whom I saw later, told me of this, and said it was not safe for a Prussian soldier to be seen alone outside the town. The Franc-tireurs had been hovering about everywhere, and Prussian detachments had been sent out to disperse them.

The belief of the French in the system of Prussian espionage is marvellous. My informant was full of anecdotes. One he told me of a Frenchwoman, the mistress of an officer at Toul, who, having obtained a pass to visit that place, brought back

reports of the interior of the fortress to some Prussian officers. One day, however, she was overheard talking with her sister who had accompanied her, and she was punished.

All day long trains were passing. One way they were filled with French prisoners and wounded Germans, coming from Sedan and Metz on their way to Germany. The other way they carried crowds of fresh German soldiers, principally of the Landwehr, towards the seat of war. The trains from Germany were all bedecked with green branches. The trucks and carriages were marked in chalk *“Nach Paris,”* and the passengers were received with shouts of applause, which they repeated from the trains. On one train going to Germany we saw a large open truck completely filled with the helmets of the dead. The trains travelled very slowly, especially at night, from the fear of night attacks by Franc-

tireurs, or lest the lines should have been torn up by the peasantry.

Having obtained a pass by means of our permit, we left Nancy in a second-class carriage for Bischwiller, a town about sixteen miles from Strasburg. Here we found an excellent little hotel. In the course of an evening walk we were somewhat startled by the "Halte-da" of a Prussian sentry, and the clang of his weapon as he emerged from a thicket where he had been concealed. From this place we prepared to get as near as possible to Strasburg the next day. There was the report of an armistice, confirmed by the circumstance that no firing had been heard throughout the day.

In the morning we found with some difficulty a small wicker cart, drawn by an active little horse, harnessed to the near side of the pole. A leather seat was slung across it, and the driver nailed a board in front as a box. He was a pedlar from

Baden. The board having broken from a jolt, we stopped at a small inn to buy or borrow another. Here we found a Parisian girl and her mother, who had left Paris on a visit to Bischwiller two months before, and now were detained from their home indefinitely. They were anxious for news, but we were as ignorant as themselves. After a long drive through a pretty country and several large villages, or rather small towns, we arrived at Vendenheim, in ordinary times the first station from Strasburg, and now a very important Prussian position. This was the first occasion on which our pass had been looked at except at a station. Here we found the ground covered with field guns and stores. Sheds were being built round them as barracks for the men, many of whom were still bivouacking under branches or straw huts. Gabions and fascines were being manufactured. Now the steeple of Strasburg

Cathedral, which we had before seen, becomes still plainer.

Going on towards Strasburg, we found the peasants at their work in the fields, apparently unheeding what was going on so near them. Their chief occupation was hop-picking. The guns were booming, occasionally relieved by the sharp crack of rifles. At length a mounted patrol advised us not to go beyond a certain patch of hops standing alone near the road. As we saw peasants working there, however, we advanced further till we arrived at the fourth kilometre stone out of Strasburg. Here, on the right, we found a large detachment of troops moving under a trench. They advised us not to go further on the road, but said we might take a road at right angles on the left, which led to a village called Bischheim. As we advanced along this road, which inclined towards Strasburg, the firing became more

rapid, and we saw the masses of white smoke blowing over the hill which lay between us and the basin in which the town is hidden. After walking about a mile we reached Bischheim. Here we found troops in constant movement, and some waggons we had previously met laden with gabions going to the trenches.

The street now again turns at right angles, leading directly towards Strasburg. We see houses which have been shelled, their roofs looking something like bricks in a kiln. The shells fall in through the roof, then burst, blowing the tiles off the house from the inside. We ask of a sentry how far we may go. He points out to a mark in the road about 100 yards before us, and beyond a very damaged house, saying that it is forbidden to go further. Some Frenchmen standing near a wine shop tell us that shells fall frequently in the street, but that the village being French the garrison

spares it as much as possible. I ask him whether he knows how the garrison is supplied. Looking suspiciously, he answers, "I do not know much about it, but I am certain it is well supplied for at least five or six months." A road to the left slopes towards the town behind the shattered house. It is marked: "Road to the first parallel." Down this go the waggons with the gabions. We follow them some yards, the sound of the guns getting nearer and nearer. The streets are more lonely; there are no loungers. The houses are empty. We turn to the right up a small street, the houses of which are all more or less injured. At last we come to a house facing the town. There is a low wall surmounted by a paling. Mr. James jumps on the wall, and shouts to me to come, as he can see everything. We get up, and before us lies the whole town—the cathedral with its walls damaged, the Prussian batteries pouring forth their shot,



and the smoke from the town answering. Of a sudden we hear near us the pirr of a shell. We jump down, then get up again to take one more look. We find that in a dip of the garden not forty feet below us there is a Prussian battery. We have been doubtless seen from the town with our glasses behind the palings, and the shot was, to use a French phrase, *à notre adresse*. We make the best of our way off—not too soon : we had scarcely got down a few yards when other shells fly across the street over the opposite houses, and fall in the main street, at the very point which had been marked out as dangerous. On turning round we find a printed indication we had not before seen—“Road to the 8th Battery.” We had been within a mile of the cathedral.

Driving a little way up the road, we stopped to luncheon, and were joined by some Prussian soldiers, who were glad to receive some cigars and a bottle of kirsch-

wasser our driver fortunately had brought with him. We then drove home the same way. It was curious to notice the gradations of sound of the cannon. As we left the place the reports became fainter and fainter; but there are two guns of some large size, whose roar we heard plainly for many miles off. At Brumath, where we stopped to bait our brave little horse, it was dark. We went into a Roman Catholic church, entirely filled by women. Two women were reading a sort of Litany in German, and other women responded. As we left Brumath we perceived for the first time in the clouds the reflection of the shells fired from Strasburg. This continued for a long time, like flashes of summer lightning. Once, when we neared Bischwiller, we thought we heard the report of firearms.

Early next day we left our hotel to catch a train for Hagenau, whence we hoped to see the field of Woerth. Trains were very

irregular, the only fixed one being the mail train, at seven in the evening. Special ones were, however, constantly coming. Ill-luck, however, pursued us this day. No train arrived till 5 P.M., and all this time we were wasting our time at the station. Here we met a French soldier who had fallen ill after Sedan, and had been tended at Bischwiller. He had been a soldier from childhood, an *enfant de troupe*. For three days previous to the fighting off Sedan he had received only two biscuits, and the troops had been nearly starved before the battle. He was very indignant against the Emperor, and against the generals, as was a young man whose family resided in a village close to Strasburg, but who was going to join his mother at Weissenburg. His father remained at his own house at Schiltigheim, or as it is commonly called, Schellig. The house had as yet escaped, but his father lived in the

cellar. We found him—as, indeed, were all the inhabitants of the conquered territory—most loyal to his country, but allowing that the conquerors had behaved with all the indulgence possible in war time. He confirmed the news of the supplies at Strasburg, saying that before the war every brewer had sent 1000 sacks of malt into the town. We also met an English gentleman who keeps an educational institution on the Rhine, together with some of his pupils, who, knapsacks on their backs, were exploring the fields of battle. He gave me some interesting details of the military organisation of Prussia. By his account Prussia must now have under arms, in and out of France, 1,500,000 men.

At five o'clock the train arrived, and we took our places to Weissenburg, for the first time paying our fare. We advanced with great slowness, staying a long time at every station. At about half-past nine we

found ourselves at Soultz-sous-Forêts, about fifteen miles from our starting-place. Here we stayed some time. At last we moved on, but had not advanced a mile when we were stopped by signal, and forced to return. This was to allow the passage of the mail train which had left some two hours after us. On our arrival at Weissenburg we found it hopeless to get further that night. The town was fully occupied, and we could find only a species of barn at a third-rate inn, in which mattresses were hurriedly thrown down for us. This was our worst night's lodging. The next morning we went by the regular train to Neunkirchen. Here we breakfasted. The town was full of rinderpest, and having passed a circle in which the disease raged, we were not allowed to return into the town until we had undergone a fumigation in a sentry box. Later in the day we arrived at Saarbrück. The station still bore the signs

of bombardment, though these were being fast repaired. Near the heights we saw the grave of 311 killed, of whom forty-one were French, among them those of General von François, and near it that of Lieutenant von François—I believe his son. A German peasant who had spent four years in Missouri was attending to the graves. We brought away some broken pieces of shell from the field, the spot where the Prince Imperial had watched the battle with his father. At Saarbrück we met Mr. Charles Winn, a son of Lord Headley, who had followed the whole campaign with General von Goeben's division, the 8th Army Corps. The account he gave us was most interesting, and it is to be hoped he will make it public.

Although we had taken our tickets to Luxemburg we were informed at Couz that the train would not go as far; so we had no alternative but to sleep at Trèves. I

think it right to add my belief, in which Mr. James also concurs, that there have been but very rare cases of undue harshness or oppression on the part of the German troops. They readily acknowledged the courage and devotion of the French, attributing their defeat entirely to bad generalship. We traversed a considerable part of the conquered territory. We never once saw a drunken man, nor heard but once an angry word, nor witnessed arrogance or exultation. The desire of the German army is for a secure and permanent peace. If that be obtained, I am convinced they will not be the first to break it.

## A VISIT TO THE FALLEN CITIES.

Hôtel de France, Naney,

October 13th.

WE left Spa for Mayence, arriving there the same night. Our passports were not even asked for at Herbesthal, the frontier, nor was our baggage examined. Here and there we saw the brassard, and occasionally some soldiers. At Cologne the trees of the avenues round the town were all cut down. But we saw no further signs of the war within Prussian territory, except at Mayence a convoy of French prisoners. Leaving Mayence the next day we took the train for Baden. This was slow, and indeed at



present all the trains are uncertain. We had crowds of fellow-passengers. Strasburg is a resort for all the sightseekers in Germany. It is compensating Baden for its ill-luck in having shut up its gambling tables since July. Though cold, damp and gloomy, and with its avenues empty, Baden has now her hotels well filled. On the road there was a little news, a telegram was sold by hawkers of the sortie from Metz on the 8th, and we learnt from two English travellers that the Duke of Nassau, whose death was reported, had never left Frankfurt, but was still there.

We left Baden very early in the morning, to escape the great crowd bound for Strasburg by the later train. Our precaution, however, was not of much use. The train was crowded and late. In our carriage were two German gentlemen, one from Cologne, the other a resident in Strasburg. His family had been at Baden throughout

the siege, but he himself had remained to look after his business. He gave us full details and in a most interesting manner. In one malt factory 700 poor people had taken refuge, the safest place they could find. Here, even, the shells had fallen incessantly. On one occasion thirty-seven had fallen in twenty minutes. The provisions had not been wanting during the siege except meat and milk, the former being supplied by horse flesh. The first bombs were fired on the 13th of August till the 15th. There was a rest till the 18th and 19th, and again till the 23rd. From that date the fire was kept up continuously till the day of the surrender, September 28th. At first every kind of false telegram was circulated of French successes, both at Paris and Metz; but, notwithstanding, the army was quite disorganised, the soldiers, who for many years had committed unpunished outrages on the inhabitants, got drunk and

blundered. The Mobiles did not attend except when they liked—some officers absenting themselves for weeks at a time. There were no artillery except some marine artillerymen who had been sent to man gunboats on the Rhine, of which there were several under Admiral Excelmans and Captain Dupetit Thouars. These, only about forty in number, had worked day and night, and endeavoured to break in some of the young Mobiles to man the guns. At Strasburg everyone speaks well of these two officers and their men—the former, the citizens rank as high as General Uhrich for the defence of the place. The inhabitants differed as to the surrender, but it became necessary at last to prevent an assault, which by the laws of war justifies pillage. In answer to an enquiry as to the feelings of the town towards the Prussians, and on the question of annexation, my informant, who was very fair, replied that the Pro-

testants had been far from averse to the Prussians, while the Roman Catholics were strongly against them. The latter had been told that the first act of the Prussians, if victorious, would be to force them to become Protestant. But the whole population was indignant at the town having been uselessly bombarded, and this with incendiary bombs. I asked whether this had not been done in retaliation for the bombardment of Kehl. He most distinctly answered in the negative. The bombardment of Strasburg town by the Prussians had preceded the bombardment of Kehl, which was begun as an act of retaliation. The havoc was awful. All the manuscripts in the library had been destroyed; as the building adjoined a large Protestant church it was thought safe, but the Prussians did not respect it. The Roman Catholic bishop reported to be dead is still living. A Protestant minister, however, who took a strong part in negotia-

tions for a surrender, has died through old age, anxiety and fatigue.

We are now arrived at Kehl, where we take a carriage, or rather a cart, for Strasburg. Our party consists, besides myself, of Mr. Alfred Seymour, M.P., who had accompanied me from Spa, and the two German gentlemen we had met in the train. After driving a few yards, began the scene of desolation we had to encounter for some hours. Houses completely destroyed, houses half destroyed, whole streets through the windows of which nothing could be seen but daylight, heaps of ruined bricks, tiles and stones, all ending with the railway station, almost equally in ruins. A great portion of the bridge of boats has been destroyed, but it is sufficiently repaired, though on a smaller scale, for traffic. The first portion of the railway bridge on the Kehl side, made for turning, is much damaged, but the rest is intact. Near the

bridge is a plank-covered passage, through which travellers from France must pass to be disinfected of the rinderpest.

On the Strasburg side of the river everything is destroyed—the French Custom House and Gendarmerie, and every other building. Trees are laid low and gardens devastated. No square foot of land has escaped. Now we pass some miles of road lately bordered by an avenue of sycamore trees, planes and chestnuts. These have been cut down or hurled down. The few remaining are battered by shell. Before reaching Strasburg we see the ruins of the citadel, literally razed to the ground, and soon after we pass through the gate of the city, La Porte d'Austerlitz.

The town of Strasburg, to use a rough simile, is somewhat in the shape of a leg of mutton. The broad end is to the west, from north to south, and it tapers to the east. On the west, even in its greatest

breadth, it is separated from the city by a canal falling into the river Ill. This portion of the city, about one-fifth of its length, and the whole breadth, may be said to be entirely destroyed, scarcely one stone resting on another. It is called the Canton Ouest, and opens to the country by the gates, the *Porte de Pierres*, the *Porte de Saverne*, and the *Porte Nationale*. The whole length of the quays on both sides is destroyed. On the edges of the canal were huts constructed with shutters against the walls, where the inhabitants, driven from their homes, had taken shelter. Due north in the Canton Nord, bounded by the ramparts of the *Porte des Juifs*, the havoc is equally terrible. This extends southwards at rapid intervals, and has overwhelmed almost every public building in the town: churches, theatre, library, préfecture, arsenal, all are thoroughly destroyed. The cross on the top of the cathedral is battered on one

side and hangs obliquely. The walls of the cathedral are damaged, its outer roof entirely burnt, while holes in the inner vaulting open on the sky. Most of the old glass is removed. The remainder is much shattered. On the north-east the narrowest portion opens on the north by the *Porte des Pêcheurs*, and on the east by the *Porte d'Austerlitz*; the ruin on the north and east portion is equally great, while every building in the citadel is literally levelled with the ground.

On our arrival we drove to the *Hôtel de Paris*. This is monopolised by the Governor-General, Count Bismarck-Bohlen, and his staff. We could not even find food; so, leaving our bags, we started with a guide to see the town. Our first care was to take tickets at the *Mairie*. These are sold for the benefit of the poor. No one, however, is allowed to visit the ramparts, on account of the unexploded projectiles still lying in



them. We were told that even the Emperor of Russia would not receive permission. Notices are posted calling on the inhabitants to advise the authorities of any of these projectiles found in their houses, that they may be taken away by competent hands. Our first visit was to the lunettes 52 and 53, on the taking of which the town surrendered. These were fired on by the batteries from Schiltigheim, on the north, till they were abandoned. A footway was then made with gabions and fascines over the moat, and the deserted lunettes thus occupied and a breach made in the ramparts, resistance became hopeless. An officer who explained the operations told us that while the footway was being made the French artillery opened fire transversely on the Prussians at work. The guns, however, were so badly served that all the shells flew over them, and only one man was hurt during the whole of the night. The

lunette once occupied, a trench was dug in the direction of the rampart, on the completion of which white flags were displayed from every portion of the fortifications. Prussians are now engaged in restoring the damage.

Returning from the lunettes, we went to the Hôtel de la Maison Rouge, where we found dinner, and were promised accommodation. The *table d'hôte* was crowded with, I may almost say, hundreds, amongst whom one of our German fellow-travellers found no less than twelve of his Cologne fellow-townsmen. After dinner we visited the citadel, on the way to which, as well as within its walls, we found the same unsparing destruction. Where the ruin has not been wholesale it has been general. Through the whole city it may be asserted that no street has escaped the loss of some houses, and no house has escaped injury of some kind. The siege of Strasburg lasted

six weeks, and is almost unprecedented in engineering history. Yet the English Government, with that prevision which marks wise rulers, sent no one engineer officer to watch it; nor, indeed, did it send any English officer to watch the vast operations of the war till Strasburg had fallen. Since then it has deputed Captain Hozier to attend the head-quarters of the army. If it is right to send him now, the question may be asked why it was not equally right to send him sooner?

After seeing the citadel, I took a carriage to visit the trenches and to find out the place where Mr. James and myself had been exposed to some danger in watching the siege about two days before the surrender. To arrive at this point I had to traverse the trenches, but I found the spot without much difficulty. Here, to my astonishment, I discovered that we had not been, as we imagined, at Bischheim, but at Schiltigheim,

or Schellig, a suburb which joins Bischheim without interruption of building. The house at which we had stood was just over the first parallel, at the very point from which the most deadly fire had been poured on the town. Between it and the town not a single house was standing, and the gunners who had aimed at us must naturally have thought we were reconnoitring the position. The suburbs show a destruction equal to that of the town. Houses, trees, and gardens were one mass of confusion and rubbish. The inhabitants of the town complain that Schiltigheim, as being the residence of rich merchants, was spared, in the first instance, by the besieged, as, if destroyed before the attack, it would have deprived the besiegers of the covert from which they directed their fire.

Meanwhile my companions had been conversing with some of the inhabitants. It appears that during the siege service was

never once interrupted at the cathedral. No priest, however, was hurt, one Suisse alone being wounded in the ankle. The residents were not satisfied with the surrender; notwithstanding their sufferings they were quite ready to continue. Admiral Exelmans was opposed to the surrender, which was, however, quite justifiable in a military point of view, the more so from the disorganised state of the garrison. All, however, bore testimony to the good conduct of the Prussian soldiery.

We made at Strasburg the acquaintance of a Johanniter Knight on his way to Pont-à-Mousson, and with him we, the next day, took a carriage to Vendenheim, the nearest station to the town. On our way we passed the site of a mortar battery, and near the station we found a large dépôt of artillery I had seen on a former occasion. We took first-class tickets, but first, second, and third-class carriages were full, and our

only resource was a luggage van which contained the mail-bags and a Bavarian postal official. A regiment, it is said, has been going daily from Strasburg to Nanteuil, and the carriages were full of officers. On our way we passed several long trains full of soldiers, and some laden with the heavy siege artillery which is being massed round Paris. Besides the Bavarian postal officer, we had with us in the van one or two railway workmen going to Meaux, and the servant of a colonel of Hussars in charge of his master's luggage, and very ill. As we started we saw an officer ordering some men to take particular care of a box placed in our van. It belonged to a French lady on her way to Châlons-sur-Marne. Throughout the whole journey the officer seemed most anxious to show her every attention. Before arriving at the Vosges passes, we were struck by a peculiar circumstance. A superior railway official, in uniform, wearing

a uniform coat trimmed with fur and travelling in the train, entered our carriage. Opening a portmanteau he took out a revolver, placed it in his pocket, closed his valise, and resumed his place in the train. Soon we came to the Vosges, and here we were struck by the sight of Prussian soldiers helping peasant women in tending their cows. We could not help contrasting these peaceful employments with the aspect of the country. The train runs through narrow passes covered with thick beech woods and hornbeam coverts. Frequent and long tunnels interrupt the road, and it seemed inconceivable that the French could have given up these defiles without a struggle. At Meaux the destruction of a tunnel has much interfered with the approach of the Prussians; and a small force in the Vosges, with the connivance of the peasantry and the blowing up of the tunnels, might have held the largest Prussian army at bay for

months. The Prussians evidently appreciated the value of these positions. At every village there was a strong Prussian force. Patrols were frequently passing on the line, and the mouths of tunnels were strictly guarded. At Lutzelsburg, the station of Phalsburg, some Bavarian soldiers asked for stockings, of which they appeared in great want. At a further station nearer Lunéville two or three Saxons joined us in the van on their way to Lunéville. With the good-natured gossip of their country they told us that, a few days before, on the Sunday, a severe fight had taken place near Lunéville with a strong party of Franc-tireurs. The Prussian troops had been surprised without ammunition, and the Franc-tireurs had been beaten off with stones. We also learnt that on more than one occasion these irregular troops had fired on the trains. This circumstance accounted for the very strong detachments along the



line. It cannot be doubted, as the days grow shorter, that the inhabitants will organise themselves more completely and harass the German troops. It is quite apparent that when men of superior intelligence take command of guerilla bands, the position even of a triumphant army may be rendered most wearisome. At Lunéville the Vosges defiles close, and Nancy is not far distant.

We were bent on visiting Toul. A train was just starting from Nancy, and, after very little difficulty and a good deal of bustle, we obtained leave to go by it from the Etapen commandant's office, in which were two remarkably civil officers—Bavarians—one of whom spoke French, the other English. They confirmed the news of the Franc-tireurs, and said the Prussian losses had been heavy.

I resumed my letter at Luxemburg, October 15th. An hour takes us to Toul

through a very pretty country planted with vines and tobacco. The approach to the town bore the usual vestiges of war: gardens laid waste, houses in ruin, and trees felled. The way from the station to the gate lies through what was once an avenue of fine planes, all now cut down. A first glance of the town gives the key to the whole siege. High over the city hangs a hill called St. Michel, totally unfortified. Everyone knew the weakness of this position. A woman told us that in her childhood the citizens had always said that Toul could not resist a siege on account of this height. Yet it had never been fortified. The Prussians there placed the batteries by which the town was bombarded and taken.

A Mecklenburg officer we met in the train led us to the hotel. His civility, though well meant, did not add to the warmth of our reception. It led later to a serio-comic scene.

After engaging our rooms we went to see the town and the cathedral. Toul was once a bishopric known as "*Le Riche Évêché*," from having in its jurisdiction 1700 parishes. Gradually the erection of sees at Nancy and Verdun diminished its importance, and the diocese was abolished at the Concordat.

The cathedral, which is very beautiful, suffered greatly in the revolution of 1793, during which much of the sculpture on the walls was damaged. On this occasion it has undergone considerable injury. A window in one of the twin towers has been completely destroyed. The rosace, celebrated for its beauty, over the principal entrance, has not escaped. Some of the painted glass has been much injured. The church of *St. Gengulphus* or *St. Gengoult*, which we saw the next day, has suffered far more seriously. Its rosace has been entirely blown away, and a portion of its

beautiful cloister has been much injured. From what we learnt the Prussian authorities are much annoyed at the damage. During the beginning of the siege some young artillery officers made practice on the towers of the churches. Towards the end, however, some older men arrived, stopped this wantonness, and reproved the offenders. The town itself does not present so much appearance of injury as might be expected. This comes from the shells having fallen on the roofs and damaged the houses internally. The interiors of some were much destroyed. Some were bulging out, and had to be supported by beams across the street. All were being repaired. The severest dilapidation we saw was in the civil hospital near the gate. Here one side of the quadrangle had been utterly ruined, including the chapel and its organ. In the uninjured wing is a hospital. Near the hospital stood a large number of cannon.

On attempting to look at them we were warned off by a sentry.

The history of the siege is curious. The day before it began, a general with 1500 men—500 of whom were artillery—thinking the defence hopeless, had left the place. The garrison remaining consisted of about 120 soldiers of the line, some pensioners, and 2000 of the Mobile. With this force the inhabitants, military and civil, insisted on holding out, the guns being chiefly managed by the pensioners and the Mobile. At first the Prussians, thinking the town almost defenceless, made an imprudent advance, and incurred considerable loss from a sortie of the garrison. The commander surrendered only to avoid the heavy bombardment of the town. Many of the civil inhabitants were averse to capitulation. One woman told us that she had become quite accustomed to the bombardment, and regretted that her fellow-citizens had sur-

rendered so soon. She considered herself more likely to make a good soldier than her husband. “Je n’ai pas d’enfants—voyez-vous—et je ne m’aime pas trop. Ainsi, je ne crains pas la mort, et le danger m’amuse.” We particularly enquired of her how the Prussian soldiers behaved. She replied that nothing could be better than their conduct; it was far better than that of French soldiers. In one shop we saw a curious phenomenon. Some wax lucifer matches, exposed in a window during the bombardment, had entirely lost the phosphorus. The ends, though unexploded, had become quite white. The scene to which I before alluded was enacted by a Frenchman at the *table d’hôte*. As we came in we found our three places arranged together, opposite that of the officer we had met. At the end of the room was a table between the two windows, at which the Frenchman was seated. During dinner he

said not a word, but placed his face in his hands, gradually edging round his chair so as to turn his back on us. Seeing this I wished to explain to him that we were not Prussians, and on asking for some wine I said to the waitress, "*Avez-vous du vin sec? Quand à nous autres en Angleterre.*"——At the last word he wheeled round his chair and cried to the maid, "*Sec, Marie, du vin sec, voyez-vous pour ces messieurs,*" and during the rest of dinner was full of attention to us. Later, he interrupted the conversation once or twice to narrate the occasions on which the garrison had got the better of the besiegers, anecdotes which the Prussian officer took very good-naturedly. Another curious incident marked our visit to Toul. While taking our tickets at the station (October 12th), a Government courier came into the office to have his way bill signed. He told the officer in charge that he had arrived with a special train convey-

ing a Prussian officer and a French general from Metz to treat for the surrender of that fortress. Standing at the station was an engine with a single carriage containing the two officers in question. I saw the French general, by accident, as he endeavoured to conceal himself behind the blinds.\*

The next day our first-class tickets took us, like the day before, in third-class carriages, and we returned to Nancy. The town was not so full as on my former visit, and we found very good accommodation at the excellent Hôtel de France. After our arrival twenty-two persons were refused admittance. The chief part of the inmates are Prussian officers sent on billets given by the Maire. At my last visit I found Nancy without newspapers. Now the *Courrier du Bas Rhin* is published, as well as the *Moniteur Officiel du Gouvernement Général de Lorraine et du Préfet de*

\* This officer was, I believe, General Boyer, 1892.



*la Meurthe.* Publié pas ordre du Commissaire Civil de la Lorraine. It is printed at the "Imprimerie (militairement occupée) de Hinzelin et Cie., à Nancy." I have now with me the last number, the eighth, published on the 13th. It first gives in the *Partie Officielle* a decree of the Provisional Government of France of October 1st, postponing the election "qui constate l'antagonisme entre ce Gouvernement et la Délégation de Tours." Next followed telegrams, then Government proclamations, amongst these a few of considerable severity. Mayors are called upon by the Governor-General von Bonin to furnish within three days lists of those who, by French law, are subject to the conscription. In case of the departure or absence *non motivé* of any individual inscribed in these lists, the parents and guardians, or, in their default the communes, are to be fined 50 fr. a day for

each individual absent, and for each day of absence.

Then comes a notification of the Marquis de Villers, Commissaire Civil en Lorraine, threatening punishment to those damaging the telegraph lines. It is curious to remark that all the chief functionaries in Lorraine are descendants of French *émigrés*. The Governor-General is General von Bonin, the Prefect Comte Renard, and the Commissaire Civil the Marquis de Villers. The title of Marquis does not exist in Germany. To return to the *Gazette*. After the last notification follows a list of the trains between Nancy and Epernay and Ars-sur-Moselle. These, for some reason, are so arranged as to arrive at each station about ten minutes after the departure of another train in the same direction, thus making consecutive travelling impossible. The *Partie Officielle* ends with a paragraph headed, "Département de la Meurthe,"

showing that the punishments indicated are not vain threats :—

“On the first of this month the gendarmes stationed at Flavigny and Vezelise were attacked by Franc-tireurs. One gendarme was murdered, a second severely wounded, and six others taken prisoners. The complicity of the inhabitants of these communes not being doubtful, the Governor-General has been obliged to take the most energetic measures to interest the communes in the security of the German employés. In consequence these communes have been sentenced to fines of 30,000 fr. and 100,000 fr., and the Mayors, as well as two members of the Municipal Council, have been seized as hostages. The houses in which the crime was committed have been burnt and razed, and the entire communes are threatened with the same fate if the gendarmes taken prisoners are not at once set free.”

The rest of the *Gazette* is taken up with extracts of French papers, including the *Situation*, all tending to discredit the Republican Government, and in favour of the late Imperial *régime*.

This leads me to some very remarkable conversations we have had with Germans of all kinds on the subject of peace. Amongst those who do not belong to well-informed circles, the current belief is that the King of Prussia will not make peace with a Republican Government. It is openly declared by all the coffee-house politicians that after taking Paris the King will bring back the Emperor and will make peace with him. The Germans in general seem to have a horror of Republicanism. The importation of Garibaldi into France has roused a very bitter feeling, and the opinion prevails that no peace of a permanent character can be concluded with any but a monarchical government. These

floating rumours are strengthened by certain circumstances which may or may not be relevant. Bourbaki's visit to the Empress, and his protracted absence from Metz, for he has not as yet returned there, are much remarked on. A passport was given him by the Prussians under the name of Regnier. Besides this it is beyond a doubt that great dissensions are going on between the original garrison of Metz and the force under Bazaine. The former, numbering about 30,000, still in the town, recognises the Republic; the latter, about 70,000, encamped within the outer circle of the fortress, refuses this recognition. If the general we saw at Toul is not about to treat the capitulation, what was his mission?

The consideration, therefore, presenting itself is the extent of annexation. What will France yield? With how little will Prussia be satisfied? It is now generally known that Prussia is not quite so innocent

in the cause of the war as to throw the blame wholly on France. Lord Clarendon, six months before his death, was acquainted with the project of placing the Prince of Hohenzollern on the throne of Spain. His influence was sufficient to obtain the renunciation of the project, which was renewed after the determination plainly manifested by the British Government, of reducing their armaments at any risk. It may, beyond dispute, be affirmed that the army of Prussia and the people of France are desirous of peace.

The Prussian army round Metz is ill of dysentery, with a certain admixture of typhus. A thousand men daily, it is said, are invalided, and must be replaced by others. On the other hand, the French people are desirous of pursuing unmolested their vocations. Peace is the object and wish of Lorraine. It was for peace they voted the *plébiscite*. I was told more than

once in my journey that the people were indifferent to the form of government, provided they are secure of peace. On the walls of Pont-à-Mousson are still seen proclamations addressed to the people, advocating the *plébiscite*. They run :—" If you want peace, vote *oui*. If you want stability, vote *oui*." The vote was given on these conditions. A peasant said to me, " What do I care for an Empire or a Republic? I am an innkeeper, a baker and a farmer. I can never aspire to be a prefect. All I want is to carry on my commerce and bring up my children. On the other hand, a Prussian Landwehr soldier said to me, " I am away from my family; I am nearly forty years of age; I leave a wife and four children, and all I receive for their support is four thalers a month. Do you think we want the war to continue? " There is a clear irritation on the part of the Prussian soldiery on account

of the war. This will add to the difficulties of peace. The Lorrainers speak highly of the superior officers and of the soldiers. The lower officers are the least amiable. I saw the station-master at Nancy thump and maul with his fist a porter on a very slight pretext, and in the presence of many other officers. Such acts create more hostility than the taking of cities. If territory be annexed there may be a certain emigration, but if the annexation be judiciously carried out by conciliatory administrators, Prussia may obtain all she really requires, or is entitled to require, without fear for the future. But she must make haste ere the night cometh, when no man can work.

The intentional inconvenience of the trains gave us some difficulty in leaving Nancy. We therefore took a carriage to Pont-à-Mousson, so as to catch the trains running on the railway recently constructed



by the Prussians from Pont-à-Mousson to Remilly, where it falls into the regular line from Metz to Saarbrücken. After a short stay at Pont-à-Mousson we thought it better to drive on to Remilly. The road was full of warlike images: long files of troops, convoys of ammunition, crosses marking graves, two encampments, felled trees, shattered houses; while, for some portion of the road, we not only heard but saw the bombardment of Metz, the cathedral of which stood boldly forward. The shots were principally fired from Fort St. Quentin, which overhangs the town on the north-west, but is seen quite plainly on the south. At Remilly the train was full, but we were allowed to sit on the guard's look-out at the top of one of the carriages, our bags being placed in a precarious position on a ledge beneath. The train was very long, full of soldiers invalided, of private passengers, and of persons connected with the army.

We performed the journey to Saarbrücken (about 30 miles) in something under five hours. It is said that the bombardment of Paris will begin on the 18th.

## PRINCE LOUIS-NAPOLEON.

Madrid, April 19th, 1892.

ON reading over these letters, written nearly twenty-two years ago, I recall other personal incidents in connection with the Emperor Napoleon III. In 1848, on the 10th of April, I remember seeing a detachment of special constables, among whom I was told was Prince Louis-Napoleon. Towards the close of the same year I was present at a party given, I think, by Mrs. Mountjoy Martin, where he was also a guest. Shortly after, he left England for France. At the end of that December, accompanied by Sir Arthur Otway,\* I paid a visit to Paris, then almost abandoned by

\* Now Right Hon. Sir Arthur Otway, Bart., late Chairman of Ways and Means, 1892.

foreign visitors on account of the disorganised state of politics. During our stay Prince Louis-Napoleon was elected President. We were unable to obtain a window to see his solemn entry. At that time it was the habit of many Englishmen to buy their shoes at Paris; and a shoemaker named Mause, or Mause, whom some of my party employed, an old soldier and a sergeant-major of the National Guard, offered to find us places in the ranks of his corps. We therefore went four of us together—Sir Arthur Otway, the late Captain Gallwey, R.N., the late Colonel Gordon Cumming, and myself. Our guide provided us with muskets, and there was nothing incongruous in our plain clothes, as many of the National Guard themselves were without uniform. It was a bright frosty morning, and all Paris seemed in high spirits. Bands were playing gay tunes, and many of the National Guard danced fantastic

quadrilles, all evidently exhilarated at the termination of the struggle. At length a signal was given, and the Prince-President approached with his staff. My friends and myself, who were in the front rank, presented arms as he passed. Thus I witnessed his official entry into France.

Later on I was presented to him as Emperor at a ball at the Tuileries, and later on again I had an audience of him on a proposal for improving the communications between Dover and Calais. The audience was given to me at the request of his early friend, Lord Malmesbury, to whom when at the Foreign Office I had been private secretary, and of Sir Algernon Borthwick,\* who both supported the project. The Emperor was much interested, and invited me to return later to discuss the plan ; but meanwhile other circumstances intervened. It was not long before the final catastrophe,

\* M.P. for South Kensington.

and I never saw him again until the events narrated in the foregoing letters. It was therefore my lot to see Napoleon III. first in exile; then on his official entry into France as President; next, in the height of his fortunes as Emperor; and last, at his final departure from France and his return as a prisoner into his final exile. I have since met others of his family. I heard the speech delivered in 1879 by the Prince Imperial, whom I have often met, at the dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund—a speech remarkable for its force, thought and diction, but I fancy no one but, perhaps, some old and faithful servant can have seen the Emperor himself as I saw him in all those separate and special contrasts of his progress.

## UNWRITTEN HISTORY.

A FEW years since there died at Torquay a very remarkable man. He had been in his youth a lawyer in London. He was much prized by a certain section of society higher than was likely either from his birth or home surroundings. He helped young men out of difficulties without ruining them, and was consulted by every kind of foremost man. He was much in the intimacy at one time of Lord Beaconsfield, who mentioned him in one of his early novels. He later was the close friend and confidant of Lord Malmesbury, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Sir Henry Bulwer, the younger Lord Lytton, and others. He had been celebrated by Lord Winchilsea in a ballad, and was a friend of Lord Houghton. He had

been employed professionally by the Emperor Napoleon III., and by Messrs. Scott the bankers. He had an accurate acquaintance with the affairs of almost every one, and a personal experience of the secrets of many. In his early days he had lived very expensively and hunted a pack of hounds, I think in Bedfordshire. He was very popular and kind-hearted, always ready to render a service. He hampered himself very much by the purchase of some building land in Paris, which did not develop itself with sufficient rapidity, and on this account he lived for many years at Paris. Then he superintended the administration of Château Lafitte, which belonged to the Scotts. He gave small dinners, collected china, and corresponded with many persons in England. I made his acquaintance about the year 1860, and some time afterwards met him at frequent intervals. Very late in life he became reconciled to



his wife, from whom he had long been separated, and came to live with her and an aunt of hers past ninety-five in a queer old-fashioned Georgian house at Norwood Green near Southall. It opened on the road, and behind it was a lawn with large cedars and other spreading trees which the old lady had seen planted. Later his wife and her aunt died, and he bought the lease of a house at Torquay, where he spent his last days. By some means, almost unseen, he kept up his knowledge with the world of movement, young and old. Accident, on more than one occasion, revealed to me the rare accuracy with which he narrated whatever he told about others. He had a surprising memory, and I often regret not having put his anecdotes on record. He once gave me a wonderfully interesting account of the duel in which Lord Camelford was killed, the particulars of which I cannot recall; but all to the credit of Lord Camel-

ford, who had, it appears, prepared a post-chaise, and a large sum of money, to help him to escape in case he should kill his adversary. But as he lay dying on the ground he insisted on the opponent making use both of the carriage and the money.

Amongst his stories there are one or two I specially recollect, and one of which is recalled to me by the name of Napoleon III. I had one day met at my friend's a Mr. S——, a small lively man of whom he told me the story. It appears that some short time before the escape from Ham of Prince Louis Napoleon, an early friend of his, an Englishman of some influence, had been allowed to pay him a visit. I fancy the Englishman was Lord Malmesbury, but I do not think he himself ever told me the circumstance. During this visit the Prince declared that everything was prepared for his escape, and on some doubt being expressed, he took his visitor to the window,

which was surrounded by guards and sentries. The Prince then made a sign by curling one side of his moustache, and the sign was repeated by most of the soldiers and civilians who were in sight of the window.

The Prince then went on to say that everything was ready, and that he could escape without difficulty, if three hundred thousand francs were obtained to provide for those who would lose their places from his evasion. The visitor on returning to England mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Thomas Duncombe, the wit, and member for Finsbury, who had also been a friend of Prince Louis Napoleon. By him it was repeated to the Duke of Brunswick, then living in England, and the subject, by-the-way, of constant attacks by the *Satirist* newspaper. The Duke, who was very rich, offered to provide the money if it could be conveyed to the prisoner. Mr.

Duncombe at once proposed for the purpose the person I mentioned as having met at Norwood Green.

This gentleman belonged to a family, as I understood, engaged in the rearing of horses. His language showed that his education had not been careful, but he was very sharp, and in addition strictly honest. Mr. Duncombe had made him a kind of secretary, and he managed affairs political and private requiring much dexterity. To him the money was confided. I do not recollect how Mr. S—— ever reached the Prince. Access was very difficult, and could only be obtained by a special order from the Government. Mr. S——, however, did obtain access, gave the money, and returned to London.

Not many days later, while breakfasting at his lodgings in Conduit Street, a stranger entered his room, who was no other than the Prince. The money had produced its

effect, and he was free. For some years he could not do much for his deliverer, who still continued in the service of Mr. Duncombe. At last, however, the Prince was chosen Emperor, and within a very few days he sent for Mr. S——. He then told him that he would give him an *entrepôt*, and make him an Auditor of the Civil List. The latter office was a sinecure, with a salary of twenty thousand francs a year. On enquiry it was found that the *entrepôt* could be sold for five hundred thousand francs, being what we should call a bonded warehouse with special privileges.

The Duke of Brunswick, it is said, intended to leave his property, which was immense, to the Prince Imperial. A statement of investments found in the papers of the Emperor at the Tuileries and published as an inventory of his personal property, and which formed a text for attack was, I believe, a list of stocks belonging to the

Duke. For some reason or other the intention was abandoned, and the money was left to the town of Geneva. On the death of Mr. Duncombe Mr. S—— was made generally the manager of the Duke's affairs, and was constantly travelling on this duty between London, Paris and Geneva. I was told that he had received a paper giving to him any moneys belonging to the Duke at the time of his death, which might then be in Mr. S——'s possession. I believe he was at the time of the Duke's death travelling either from or to Geneva, and that he retained possession under the document of 40,000*l.* which he was carrying with him.

I have, since the foregoing was written, been reminded of a passage in Lord Malmesbury's "Memoirs of an Ex-Minister" which bears on this anecdote. At his visit to Prince Louis Napoleon at Ham on the 20th of April, 1845, among other things the Prince said to him—

“You see the sentry under my window? I do not know whether he is one of mine or not; if he is he will cross his arms, if not he will do nothing when I make a sign.”

According to Lord Malmesbury the Prince went to the window and stroked his moustache, but there was no response until three were relieved, when the soldier answered by crossing his arms over his musket. The Prince then said, “You see that my partisans are unknown to me, and so am I to them. My power is in an immortal name, and in that only; but I have waited long enough, and cannot endure imprisonment any longer.”

There is a further entry in the same diary on the 27th of May, 1846:—

“On returning from White’s Club a man ran over the street and stopped my horse, and at first I did not recognise him; but to my great surprise I saw Prince Louis Napoleon, whom I had left two months

before in the fortress of Ham. He had just landed in England after his escape, and was going into the Brunswick Hotel in Jermyn Street. On the same day we dined with the Duke of Beaufort at Hamilton House, and as the party was sitting down to dinner I saw opposite to me Louis de Noailles, who was one of the Attachés at the French Embassy, and said across the table to him,

Have you seen him? 'Who?' he asked. 'Louis Napoleon,' I replied; he is in London, having just escaped.' De Noailles dropped the lady who was on his arm, and made but one jump out of the room, for it seemed that the news had not reached the French Embassy. I never saw a man look more frightened." There is evidently a confusion of dates.



## MADAME DE FEUCHÈRES.

CONNECTED with my old friend is a recollection relevant only in its reference to France.

Louis Philippe, when in exile, lived for some time in the South of England in a house called the Priory, at Christchurch, a borough I once represented. The Duc de Bourbon resided in the Isle of Wight, where he formed a connection with a girl named Sophy Dawes, whom he afterwards took to France as his mistress. There she married a Baron de Feuchères, taking with her a portion of 20,000*l*. Her husband, an old soldier, had married her in ignorance of her antecedents, on discovering which he at once separated from her, refusing the money.

Some time before the death of the Duc de Bourbon Madame de Feuchères came to England and sought the advice of a lawyer. I do not remember whether this was my friend or an acquaintance of his. But the lady showed him a document purporting to be the will of the Duc de Bourbon. By this the Duke left to his mistress the whole of his property, the inheritance of the Condés, and supposed to be in those days the largest fortune in the world. She asked her adviser whether, in his opinion, on the death of the Duke, the French Government would admit the validity of the bequest. The lawyer pointed out that the legacy as it stood would be irksome to her. It would entail the administration of a large landed property, including Chantilly and other domains, and she must alter the habits of a lifetime. Besides, there was always the chance of the will being invalidated. "Take it back," he said, "and if you have

any influence with the Duke induce him to alter it. Make up your mind to a sum of money which will give you every comfort and luxury you may require, and then ask the Duke to leave the remainder to the family of Orleans. They will see to the validity of the will, and you will come into your fortune under the shadow of theirs."

The lady took the advice, and on the death of the Duc de Bourbon at St. Leu in 1830, she succeeded, though the will was disputed, to what he had left her, which was very considerable. She bought from Lord Stuart de Rothesay, whom she had known at Paris, a house at Mudeford, near Christchurch, called Bure Homage, and had it decorated by some of the principal French artists. At her death intestate at Chantilly in 1840 or 1841, aged forty-six, the house passed, first to a brother, then to a nephew, Mr. Dawes, who was for a short time member either

for Newport or for the Isle of Wight. It is now in the possession of Mr. Frank Ricardo, the son of Mr. Mortimer Ricardo, who bought it. It was once in the possession or occupation of Sir John Littler, the Indian general.

## THE PRINCE IMPERIAL.

I AM glad to find a place in this short record for the speech which I heard delivered by the Prince Imperial at the dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund on the 18th of May, 1878. Lord Salisbury was in the chair, and amongst other guests were Midhat Pasha and Mr. Stanley, the traveller.

“THE PRINCE IMPERIAL: It is with pleasure that I avail myself of the opportunity afforded to me this evening to render to the English Press the homage of admiration which it deserves. For many years the Press has been a social force with which Governments and individuals have had alike to count. Not only can no one deny

in our days its importance, but every one must admit that it is a necessity of our modern civilisation. (Hear, hear.) The Press has become a necessary condition of existence to the commercial, to the scientific, and to the political world. We have merely to scan the advertising columns of any one of the influential papers to understand how useful is the Press to the development of the wealth of nations. We have merely to remember the history of the last twenty years to acknowledge the services rendered by the Press to the cause of industrial progress. If, thanks to enlightened Governments, treaties of commerce have been concluded between nations separated by centuries of hatred in order to found fruitful alliances upon joint interests, that great deed has only been rendered possible by the intelligent and energetic advocacy of the Press. (Cheers.) Science is not less than commerce indebted to the Press. Its

rapid progress arises from the fact that the observations and studies of every worker in its vast field become instantly, through the Press, the property of all; so that the whole world is but one vast laboratory, wherein every fact is registered, and wherein no effort, however slight, in the cause of human progress is allowed to be lost. But in the political world the part played by the Press is still more important. There was a time when the fate of nations was decided in secret councils of three or four men. Nowadays the force that makes and un-makes Governments, that settles peace or war, is public opinion. (Hear, hear.) That supreme jury, before which every statesman must appear and render an account, would be but a blind tribunal were it not guided by an enlightened Press. (Cheers.) The Press leads public opinion in the path of justice far better by stating facts than by defending the best of causes by theo-

retical arguments. Its mission is to become acquainted with facts, to verify them, to put before the world every kind of information, and to seek everywhere for the truth. It is that which you, gentlemen, put so well in practice. It is a proud thing to belong to a Press which rightly understands and which nobly does its duty. Amidst the European Press the English is perhaps the only one which completely fulfils its mission. There is not a misfortune which does not find in it a voice of sympathy or a hand of help. (Cheers.) There is not an injustice which is not by it held up to public scorn; there is not a noble deed which is not by it held up to public praise or admiration. United, like all Englishmen, by a common respect of your national traditions, by a common love of your country, by a common feeling of loyalty towards the Queen, political opinions do not divide you enough to make you forget



the extent of your duties towards mankind and towards England. In this kingdom, to be on the staff of a paper is not merely following the path which leads to political life. It is a noble profession. Those who have embraced it are, therefore, united by true *esprit de corps* and guided by feelings of professional honour. The object of the Association which has assembled you here this evening shows the strength of the union which joins us together, and each one of you may rightly be proud to proclaim himself, like the well-known African explorer, the soldier of the Press, which understands its importance and does its duty. (Cheers.) I am extremely touched by the way in which the kind words addressed to my fellow-guests have been received, and I beg Lord Houghton to accept, both for himself and for the Society over which he so ably presides, the expression of our deepest gratitude. (Applause.)”

## PRINCE LOUIS LUCIEN BONAPARTE.

By various circumstances I was brought for many years into close association with the late Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte, knowing several families with whom he had from early days been intimate. My acquaintance began before the Empire. He was the son of Lucien Bonaparte, the brother of Napoleon, before whom the map of Europe had been spread by the Emperor from which to choose a kingdom. Prince Louis Lucien had been born at Thorngrove House in Herefordshire, but had spent the greater part of his youth in Italy at Canino near Sinigaglia. In feature he presented a striking resemblance

to the Emperor Napoleon I. The younger brother of Prince of Canino and the elder brother of Prince Pierre, he had early in life imbibed strong liberal principles, which later he discarded. When about sixteen years of age, he wrote a poem against the Papacy, which later he upheld and revered. One stanza was thus—

Di Piero sovra il trono,  
Distrutto omai il Papato  
L'albero inalzato  
Sia della libertà.

His life was principally devoted to literature and science. He was a perfect encyclopedia of learning, ancient and modern. His knowledge of languages was remarkable, and much of his life was devoted to the philological study of Basque and the English dialects, spending much money in procuring the translation of the Song of Solomon into the English dialect. He wrote English idiomatically as the

result of much study. He also spoke it with perfect correctness, but with an effort. During his reign, his cousin the Emperor Napoleon III. made him a member of his Civil family with the title of Highness, gave him a handsome allowance, and he was created a senator with the salary assigned to that office. He for some time kept an apartment at Paris, but lived for the most part in London. Here he had purchased two semi-detached houses in Westbourne Grove, now called Norfolk Terrace, Bayswater. A communication was made between the two. He lived in one of them, but devoted the other to science, forming a magnificent philological library, and converting the cellars into a chemical laboratory. In his library there was the following inscription—

O beata solitudo,  
O sola beatitudo!

He never interfered in politics. He passed

the earlier part of his manhood near Florence, where he possessed a little villa, called the Villino Bonaparte, outside the Porta San Gallo, on a rivulet called the Mugnone, not far from the Villa Palmieri. Here he lived for many years in the society of professors and philosophers. He also possessed a villa at Montughi, left to him by his uncle the Comte de St. Leu—Louis, ex-King of Holland, and father of the Emperor Napoleon III. Among his studies at Florence was the analysis of the poison from adders, of which he at times had a collection of two or three hundred. His idea was that the venom might counteract hydrophobia. He was a man of some humour. Once showing to a young lady of a sentimental turn some fulminating poison, the least portion of which would cause instant death, she begged to be allowed to take it, as life was a burden. He at once assented, on which she expressed a

fear that the consequences of her swallowing it might distress her mother, and resented the promptitude of his compliance.

In London, where I first knew him, he often went to the house of some relatives of mine who had lived with him on terms of great intimacy at Florence. They kept up in London the old Italian habit of receiving every evening, and their house was quite cosmopolitan. They were most hospitable and kind-hearted, had a large acquaintance of a miscellaneous character, but being advanced liberals of the continental type they at times received the principal revolutionary leaders, and were cognisant of their plans and proceedings. Prince Louis Lucien, who was a faithful friend, did not desist from frequenting the house, though often deploring the political tendencies of those he met there. He made it a point of pride, when his fortunes

were prospering, not to abandon his early friends, and even as a first cousin of the Emperor Napoleon III. he was frequently constrained to meet at this house persons whose political labour and methods were distasteful to him.

I recollect on one occasion, in 1856, the lion of the evening was Orsini, who had recently escaped from prison at Mantua. I did not speak with him, but remember his face, the dominating feature of which was a pair of restless black eyes. Prince Louis Lucien drove me home that evening, and I gathered from his manner how much annoyed he had been at the meeting, and the conversation he had overheard of the Italians present. He scarcely spoke, and his mood was that of sorrow at meeting persons so hostile to the head of his family from whom he was receiving great benefits. On leaving me at my door he expressed a wish to see me again

soon, but added, henceforth it had better be at his own house. He did not entirely abandon his old friends, but never went to see them till satisfied there were no strangers. After the attempt by Orsini, I fancy he discontinued his visits altogether.

At the outset of the French disasters in 1870, he came to me at the Athenæum, of which we were both members, and curiously enough, took me in his carriage with the Bonaparte liveries to the door of the German Embassy, where I endeavoured to obtain some authentic news. This occurred a few days before my going abroad, and visiting the seat of war, as related above. At the fall of the Empire the Prince naturally lost his allowance as well as his pay as senator, and having made some bad investments, he was at one time reduced to considerable pecuniary straits. He would never at any time part with his library or



his collection of chemicals, including some very valuable metals which he intended at one time to leave to the British Museum. In this he later found some technical difficulty. He was, I believe, left one of the guardians to the Prince Imperial, for whom he had a great affection, and to whom he suggested, in case of a Bonapartist restoration, the abolition of the departmental division of France and the restoration of the old provinces. This was always a favourable subject of discussion with him. He was also fond of heraldry and questions of precedence. Mr. Gladstone, when Prime Minister, recommended him to the Queen for a pension of £250. A question being asked in the House, Mr. Gladstone explained his reasons for granting this relief, amongst others declaring that the Prince was a British subject. Later Mr. Stuart, the son of Lady Dudley Stuart, the Prince's sister, left him a considerable bequest, and he

ended his days in easier circumstances. In November, 1891, I saw him leave London for Italy, where he shortly after died.

THE END.

ALBEMARLE STREET, LONDON,  
*July, 1892.*

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